

House Republican Press Release

March 17, 2006
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Rep. Miller: State Should Help Trash to Energy Plants Increase Power Output



Money for New Boilers Could Come from CT Clean Energy Fund

With electricity rates skyrocketing and power shortages looming this summer, the state should act now to encourage Connecticut's three regional trash-to-energy plants to expand their generating capacity by making funding available to help pay for one new boiler for each of the facilities, state Representative Lawrence G. Miller, R-122nd District, said today.

"The addition of at least one new boiler at each plant would enable the facilities to burn the 400,000 tons of waste that currently is shipped out of Connecticut and increase the amount of power the plants collectively generate from 144 megawatts to almost 200 megawatts," said Representative Miller, who recently met informally with representatives from the three regional trash-to-energy plants, the Bristol Resource Recovery Facility; the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority; and the Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resource Recovery Authority.

"Although the regional facilities already have generation infrastructure in place and could provide the additional power the state needs (especially during the summer months) if they could add more boilers, they lack the financial support they need to proceed with the upgrades," Representative Miller said. "One possible source of funding for the additional boilers could be from The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF), which promotes the development and commercialization of clean energy technologies and stimulates markets for electricity from clean, renewable sources," Representative Miller said.

CCEF is administered and managed by Connecticut Innovations, a quasi-public organization that works with the state Department of Economic and Community Development to strengthen Connecticut's high-tech economy by providing entrepreneurs with capital and strategic guidance. Funding for CCEF comes from a surcharge on electric ratepayers' utility bills.

"In addition, the trash-to-energy plants should consider seeking funding from Connecticut Innovations or CCEF to help fund the installation of distributed (on-site) generation equipment at their facilities, which could add another 50 megawatts to their power output," Representative Miller said.

“The restructuring of Connecticut’s electrical industry that took place as the result of a measure enacted by the state legislature several years ago has neither stimulated the development of new generating plants nor reduced the cost of electricity to ratepayers,” Representative Miller said.

“Connecticut electricity consumers now pay among the highest rates in the country and bureaucratic red tape at the Department of Public Utility Control, the Connecticut Siting Council and the Department of Environmental Protection has made it very difficult for new generating plants to be built. If more new plants were now on-line, there would have been more competition between electricity providers, which would have helped hold down rates,” Representative Miller said.

“My proposal for state funding to help pay for a new boiler for each of the three regional trash-to-energy plants would enable them to provide reliable and badly-needed additional electricity to the state’s power grid. Since the plants do not have to rely on imported oil or natural gas because they burn trash to generate electricity, the power they provide is not subject to supply and price fluctuations that stem from sudden interruptions in the availability of foreign oil and natural gas or OPEC-mandated increases in the cost of those energy products,” Representative Miller said.